Sri Navadvipa-bhava-taranga

Bengali Verses composed in 1899 by Srila Bhakti Vinoda Thakur

Waves of Ecstatic Moods in Navadvipa-dhama

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Introduction

The Isodyana at Sridham Mayapur

Thakura Bhaktivinoda composed three very important books regarding the

transcendental realm of Sri Navadvipa Dhama:

(1) Sri Navadvipa Dhama Mahatmya (Parikrama Khanda)

(2) Sri Navadvipa Dhama Mahatmya (Pramana Khanda)

(3) Sri Navadvipa Bhava Taranga

The first book is used by many devotees from different branches of the Gaudiya Sampradaya to assist their performance of parikrama, or circumambulation of the holy places scattered over the 16 krosa (32 square miles) of this holy abode. The second book contains the scriptural evidence concerning the location and glorification of these holy places manifest in nine islands. And the third book (the present volume) is an astonishing and enchanting description of Sri Navadvipa Dhama as it appears to the bhava-siddha-nayana (eyes perfected in divine ecstatic emotion) when seen in the state of bhakti-yoga-samadhi (absolute trance in devotional service). Although seemingly small in size (168 simple Bengali verses), the position of this work amongst the literatures of bhajana-giti (devotional songbooks) is very, very exalted. Upon reading it only once, a loving devotee will not be able to give it up — it will necessarily be cultivated with a melted heart again and again.

A specifically important feature of this book is that through his eyes of love in the state of bhava- samadhi, Bhaktivinoda has described the mysterious and cardinal place known as Isodyana, or "The Lord's Garden". Within this material world, there is no historical or geographical reference to such a spot. Therefore Prabhupada Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Gosvami, who knows the inner intentions of his father, Thakura Bhaktivinoda, and who was very expert in fulfilling his wishes, duly excavated this place and many others for the benefit of the world. On the bank of Prithu Kunda (near the hill of Ballala Dighi) Srila Sarasvati Thakura manifested the lake known as Sri Radha Kunda, and upon its bank he reconstructed the Isodyana that was described by Sri Bhaktivinoda. This area, served by members of Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati's institution Sri Chaitanya Matha is also the site of the samadhi mandira (memorial tomb) of Paramahamsa Babaji Srila Gaura Kisora Dasa Gosvami Maharaja, who is an eternal resident of this Isodyana. Quite appropriately, this Garden has been planted with numerous varieties of flora that are favourable to Krishna's service such as fruit trees, flowering vines, plus all kinds of exotic foliage.

Whoever sincerely reads the Navadvipa Bhava Taranga of Om Vishnupada Sri Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura takes into their heart his moods of eagerly desiring to worship the Lord in "The Lord's Garden." By the mercy of their spiritual master, and each according to their own capacity of spiritual qualification, the respective devotees advance in their understanding of the brilliant reality of this eternal Garden, which is yet invisible to mortal eyes.

The contrast between material and spiritual vision is nicely illustrated by the Thakura in the following verses:

One whose eyes are covered by material illusion sees only a small house situated here, plus some ordinary earth, water and a few articles. But if maya becomes merciful and lifts her covering, then one sees a grand spiritual dwelling.(ll)

Why should the fallen rascal souls of Kali-yuga, bound up tightly by material illusion, have the privilege of seeing all these eternal, fully spiritual and limitless treasures of the divine realm? Maya has therefore hidden the Dhama by means of the erosive, ever-changing nature of the three rivers Ganga, Yamuna, and Sarasvati. Thus the eyes of the materialist can see only a shadow of the real Mayapur. (16)

The place called Isodyana is mentioned throughout the poetic verses of Navadvipa Bhava Taranga, specifically in verses 15, 26-29, 42, 70, 163 and 166. Thakura Bhaktivinoda, the best of the rupanuga bhaktas, has informed us of his confidential bhajana performed at this transcendental Garden in the following verses:

In the southern portion of Mayapur, on the bank of the river Ganga and very near its junction with the river Sarasvati, is the extensive grove called Isodyana (The Lord's Garden). May that Garden be the place of my eternal devotions. (26)

In this Garden, my Lord Sri Sachi-nandana performs His midday pastimes along with His devotees. Seeing the brilliance of this grove, I am reminded of the area of Radha Kunda in Braja. May this scene be eternally visible to my eyes. (27)

Huge trees and dark vines appear very dense. Among the foliage are various types of birds singing the transcendental qualities of Lord Gaura. There is a large lake and an extremely opulent temple glowing with pure gold inlaid with diamonds as well as blue and yellow sapphires. (28)

The materialists, with their eyes bewildered by the illusion of material sense perception, and who are envious of the Lord, can never see these groves. Rather, they see only a small piece of land covered with thorns, periodically thrown into utter disruption by the forceful flooding of the river Ganga. (29)

Living in my private grove next to Isodyana (The Lord's Garden) I will worship the greatest treasure - the Divine Couple Sri Sri Radha and Krishna, Who are non-different from the moonlike Sri Gauranga. (163)

Sri Navadvipa Bhava Taranga

1. Which is the crest-jewel of all holy abodes, which is the sporting-ground of the sandhini potency, which measures sixteen krosa in circumference, which is manifest in nine islands, where the chit and ananda potencies reside, and which is the sanctuary of all holy places, demigods, sages and scriptures - May the Dhama of Sri Navadvipa become visible to my eyes.

2. May my eyes behold the sixteen krosa of Vrindavan (within the circle of Mathura-mandala) as identical to Navadvipa (within the circle of Gauda-mandala). These Dhamas are but two manifestations of one principle that is infinitely beginningless and purely spiritual, and which, only for reasons of differing pastimes of the Lord, has taken the form of two immaculate abodes.

3. By His inconceivable potency (acintya sakti) which is infinite and spiritual, the Lord has brought these two Dhamas into the material world in order to liberate the living entities dwelling there. By the power of the mercy of this Sri Krishna, may the souls bound in matter someday see these abodes of Vrindavan and Navadvipa.

4. Only by acquiring proper qualifications can all the senses of the living entities taste the spiritually variegated nectar of these holy Dhamas. Since unqualified material senses are incapable of tasting this sweet nectar, those so unfortunately endowed scornfully deride these places again and again as being insignificant locations made only of dull matter.

5 .The basis of qualification is the mercy of Krishna Himself and the mercy of His devotees. Out of compassion for the living entities, the sadhus bestow this transcendental qualification unto other devotees by their own association. One cannot attain this by following the paths of jnana (transcendental knowledge),

karma (fruitive activities) or yoga (mystic exercises). Only by means of sraddha (devotional faith), while strictly keeping the association of the saintly devotees of the Lord, can one be victorious over matter.

6. The very moment that the living entity gives up the entangling network of material illusions related to the senses, the eyes of the soul will behold the splendour of the spiritual Dhama. Aha!

Oh, when will I attain that state? When will I see Sri Navadvipa Dhama, so far beyond the mirage of mundane existence?

7. Resembling an eight petalled lotus in shape, this abode is immaculately pure. It is so cooling that it defeats the illumination of millions of moons. It is so brilliant that it defeats the effulgence of millions of suns. Sometimes that Dhama will appear before my eyes.

8. In the centre of eight islands that are like the eight petals of a lotus flower is the ninth and best island called Antar-dvipa, which is exceedingly beautiful. In the middle of that island rests the yoga-pitha, or main meeting-place of the Lord and His associates, known as Mayapur. Upon seeing this place, I shall experience profuse bliss.

9. The scriptures sing of a transcendental place called Brahmapur. In that realm, Mayapur shines before one's eyes freed from illusion. Identical with Sri Gokula in the forest of Mahavan of Braja, and vastly superior to all other places in creation, that place is where the Son of Sachi performs His eternal pastimes.

10. The abode of the gopas and gopis in Braja named Sri Gokula is the same as the abode of the brahmana families in Navadvipa Dhama. In the centre of supremely purifying Mayapur is the radiant home of Jagannatha Misra. This is the eternal residence of the Lord.

11. One whose eyes are covered by material illusion sees only a small house situated here, plus some ordinary earth, water and a few articles. But if maya becomes merciful and lifts her covering, then one sees a grand spiritual dwelling.

12. Here Sri Gauranga is served by His eternal mother and father as well as by male and female servants, who are all incessantly maddened with ecstatic love. Here both His wives, Laksmi-priya and Visnu-priya, eternally serve the Lord's lotus feet. He manifests in a wondrous form complete in the five features of

Pancha Tattva.

13. The residences of Sri Nityananda Prabhu, Sri Advaita, Gadadhara and Srivasa are shining here and there in different places throughout Mayapur. Indeed, the homes of innumerable devotees are glowing in all four directions. May such a Mayapur be merciful unto me.

14. To the south-west, the combined Ganga and Jamuna rivers praise their own good fortune as they flow in the form of a serpent for rendering service to Lord Gora, the jewel of the twice-born brahmanas. Upon her banks are many different landing-steps for bathing (ghats) and also numerous temples, including the deities of Praudha Maya and Vriddha Shiva, as well as many groves and gardens.

15. In Mayapur there are countless homes of the brahmanas, plus wide avenues, courtyards, forests and temples of Lord Shiva. Flowing in the south-east are the incessant currents of the Sarasvati river. Upon her bank is the sacred area known as Isodyana, The Lord's Garden.

16. Why should the fallen rascals of Kali-yuga, bound up tightly by material illusion, have the privilege of seeing all these eternal, fully spiritual, limitless treasures of the divine realm? Maya has therefore hidden the Dhama by means of the erosive, ever-changing nature of the three rivers Ganga, Yamuna and Sarasvati. Thus the eyes of the materialist can see only a shadow of the real Mayapur.

17. By the mercy of Sri Nityananda, the holder of all spiritual powers, may that Mayapur be revealed unto my eyes imbued with proper reverence. May I, this worthless fool, become truly fortunate to behold a vision of the household pastimes of Sri Gauranga that eternally take place in this land.

18. In the centre of the island called Antar-dvipa is the village of Mayapur, situated as the central whorl of the eight-petalled lotus. That transcendental abode glows with a fair yellow aura, it is resplendent with networks of effulgences, and is supremely pure. May this place always shimmer before my eyes.

19. Here and there are wooded groves, amongst which the lake called Prithu Sarovar, and many pastures for grazing the cows. Oh how beautiful these places are to behold! There are many water canals, partitioned grain fields, and wide

main roads lined with bakula, kadamba, and many other types of large trees.

20. To the west of here, on the bank of the river Ganga, stands the town celebrated by the name of Ganga Nagar. There is the house of Ganga Dasa, where my Lord Gauranga took His young brahmana friends and carried out their studies.

21. There also, one can see the lovely hill known as Bharadvaja Tila, where the great sage Bharadvaja worshipped Lord Gaura. The sage ultimately attained ecstatic love for Lord Caitanya and then wrote scriptural verses that bestowed the gift of devotional service unto many materialistic people.

22. North of Prithu Kunda is the town of Mathura and the holy place known as Shasthi Tirtha, which is within the exquisitely beautiful forest of Madhuvan (in Braja). This is a very extensive area populated by many people. May my eyes become purified by viewing this scene.

23. Further north is the enchanting place known as Sharadenga. Here the leader of the Shabara race, out of fear of the demon name Rakta-bahu, secretly resides along with a deity of the Lord of Niladri (Jagannatha). May I always behold this place with my very eyes.

24. North west of Mathura, I shall see the splendour of the island of Simanta-dvipa, whose border is the bank of the river Ganga. There, the goddess Parvati Devi was distressed and gained relief by placing the dust from the lotus feet of Lord Gaura upon the part of her hair (simanta).

25. In the distance I will see the forest of Bilva trees (Bilvavan of Braja) where the four Kumara brothers remain in meditation on Lord Gaura. And further in the distance I will see the land known as Sankarsana Ksetra where Nityananda Prabhu performs His pastimes. This area is manifest to the learned devotees.

26. In the southern portion of Mayapur, on the bank of the river Ganga and very near its junction with the river Sarasvati, is the extensive grove called Isodyana (The Lord's Garden. May that Garden be the place of my eternal devotions.

27. In this Garden, my Lord Sri Sachi-nandana performs the midday pastimes along with His devotees. Seeing the brilliance of this grove, I shall be reminded of Radha Kunda in Braja. May all these areas be eternally visible to my eyes.

28. Huge trees and dark vines appear very dense. Among the foliage are various types of birds singing the transcendental glories of Lord Gaura. There is a large lake and an extremely opulent temple glowing with pure gold inlaid with diamonds as well as blue and yellow sapphires.

29. The materialists, with their eyes bewildered by the illusions of material sense perception, and who are envious of the Lord, can never see these groves. Rather, they see only a small piece of land covered with thorns, periodically thrown into utter disruption by the forceful flooding of the river.

30. In the centre of Madhuvan is the place called Visrama Sthala. There is the cottage of the Lord's devotee named Sridhara and also a clear pond. After rectifying the Kazi, the Lord of the three worlds came here with His followers and rested.

31. When will I shout "Ha Gauranga!" at this Visrama Sthala? I will roll upon the ground and cry in solitude. Overwhelmed with the emotions of ecstatic love, will I ever see the beautiful Sri Gauranga-sundara drinking water from Sridhara's iron pot.

32. And when, by the power of great fortune, will my eyes behold the young Son of Sachi in the midst of a rousing kirtan along with Nityananda, Advaita, Gadadhara and Srivasa, dancing and begging for ecstatic love at the house of Sridhara?

33. Looking east from there I shall see Sivarna Bihar, the site of King Suvarna Sena's incomparably majestic palace. This is where the moonlike Lord Sri Gaura-chandra dances along with His associates in an enchanting golden form.

34. When will I wander throughout Suvarna Bihar alone or in the company of other devotees, weeping and sobbing piteously with a choked voice? At the lotus feet of Gauranga I will beg for a speck of service to the Divine Couple, and then offer my very life unto the shelter of Sri Radha's lotus feet.

35. South east of there is Nrsimha Puri. When will I see the pure transcendental sweetness of this place, also called Deva-palli? I will roll about on the ground in ecstatic love while visiting this residence of Lord Nrsimha. Sincerely begging for His grace without a trace of duplicity in my heart, I will attain Krsna-prema.

36. Within my sinful heart the six enemies headed by lust perpetually reside, as

well as duplicity, the desire for fame, plus sheer cunning. At the lotus feet of Lord Nrsimha, I hope that He will mercifully purify my heart and give me the desire to serve Lord Krsna.

37. Weeping, I will beg at the lotus feet of Lord Nrsimha for the benediction of worshipping Radha and Krsna in Navadvipa, perfectly safe and free from all difficulties. When will this Lord Hari, whose terrible form strikes fear into fear itself, ever become pleased and show Me His mercy?

38. Even though Lord Nrsimha is terrifying toward the sinful souls He offers great auspiciousness unto the devotees of Lord Krsna headed by Prahlada Maharaja. When will He be pleased to speak words of compassion unto me, a worthless fool, and thereby make me fearless?

39. He will say, "Dear child! Sit down freely and live happily here in Sri Gauranga Dhama. May you nicely worship the Divine Couple and may you develop loving attachment for Their holy names. By the mercy of My devotees, all obstacles are cast far away. with a purified heart, just perform the worship of Radha and Krsna, for such worship overflows with sweet nectar."

40. Saying this, will that Lord delightedly place His own divine lotus feet upon my head? Suddenly I will experience sublime love for the Divine Couple Radha-Krsna and undergo the ecstatic transformations called sattvika. Falling on the ground, I will roll about by the door of Sri Nrsimha's temple.

41. To the west of this flows the Gandaka river, which is past the Alakananda river and Kasi Ksetra. I shall then see Godruma Ksetra, corresponding to the place in Braja where King Indra's surabhi cow worshipped Lord Krsna.

42. Within the entire three worlds there is no place comparable to Godruma. It is the forest in which the great sage Markandeya received the mercy of Lord Gaura. Just as Isodyana and Radha Kunda lie close to the bank of the river Ganga, similarly Godruma lies just as close to the bank of the river Sarasvati.

43. O my dear mind! Just worship, just worship the forest of Godruma! By this you will very soon behold the transcendental treasure of Lord Gaura's pastimes. Seeing the vision of these pastimes, you will easily attain the eternally sportive play of Radha and Krsna. Only this will fulfil all your desires.

44. Godruma corresponds to the city of Nanda Maharaja in Braja known as Sri

Nandisvara, which is the residence of the cowherd folk. Here Sri Gauranga performs various pastimes. After having a snack of milk products at a cowherd's house in the forenoon period, Nimai goes in the company of His gopa friends and tends the cows in the pasturelands.

45. The cowherd boys would say, "O brother, you are a gopala! Dressing like a brahmana boy does not suit you at all! Come on, I'll carry you on my shoulders and we'll go herd the cows. Let's head toward your mother's house in Mayapur.

46. One gopa would show great affection and give Him curds mixed with condensed milk, and another gopa would become agitated with love just by seeing the wonderfully beautiful form of the Lord. Yet another gopa would place fruits and flowers in His hand saying, "O brother! Please come to my house every day!"

47. "You are the worshipable deity for the brahmanas, but You are also the very purpose of life for us gopas. We cannot possibly forsake you - you are the only object of our meditation and consciousness. Just see the cows! On sighting you, they begin mooing and give up eating grass, even forgetting about their own calves!"

48. "Since it is now getting late, you should go home to your father's house and tomorrow we'll meet again at this place. I'll save some yoghurt, curds and condensed milk for you - but if you come late, I'll be very upset!"

49. In this way, Sri Gaura and Nitai play with the cowherd boys from day to day in the divine Godruma forest. If there is enough time, Gaura-Bhagavan again bathes in the river Ganga before proceeding home to Sri Sachi.

50. Will such a day ever be mine? When will see the pure love-laden Godruma pastimes performed by the Lord in the mood of a cowherd boy playing with His cowherd friends? With a mind fixed in the longing to serve the Lord, I will reside at my house in Godruma.

51. South of Godruma lies the enchanting island of Madhya-dvipa. It is very beautiful to behold, being filled with a radiant series of wonderful forests. There, during the midday period of His eternal pastimes, Prabhu takes His devotees along and comes to visit the seven rishis.

52. There on the bank of the river Gomati is Naimisa forest, where the assembly

of rishis are listening to recitations of the Gaura Bhagavat. In order to hear these narratives about Lord Gaura, Shiva and the other demigods quickly mount Brahma's swan-carrier and make haste to come.

53. When will I wander and wander throughout that forest and behold the wonderful vision of this assembly of sages hearing the Gaura Purana by the bank of the Gomati river? On the day of ekadasi during the most auspicious month of Kartika, I will listen to those stories of Caitanya-katha.

54. When will the audience of rishis headed by Saunaka show their mercy by grasping both my hands and putting the dust of their feet upon my head? I will exclaim, "O residents of Navadvipa, let us attentively drink the nectar of Sri Gauranga-katha in this forest!"

55. South of there lies Brahmana Puskara. This area is the same as the holy place named Sri Puskara Tirtha, and it was visited by the best of the brahmanas named Diva Dasa. Worshipping the lotus feet of Lord Gauranga at that place, Vipra Diva Dasa was consoled upon beholding a vision of the Lord's beautiful golden form.

56. Further south is Uccha Hatta, non different from Kuru-ksetra of Brahmavarta, which is s place of pilgrimage for the three worlds. Here all the demigods reside, continuously performing Gaura- sankirtan. Sometimes the present day residents of this area can hear that music.

57. During the midday period of His eternal pastimes, Lord Sri Gauranga and His associates stroll throughout all these forests, overcome with madness of divine love. While the devotees give hints of Krsna's confidential pastimes, Gauranga sings and dances and tastes the sweet ecstatic emotions of Sri Radha.

58. When will I, alone or in the company of devotees, float in the waves billowing on the ocean of love for Lord Caitanya? Behaving with utmost humility, I will wander around in the various forests of Madhya-dvipa during the midday period and contemplate the ecstatic emotional states felt by the Lord in those same places.

59. When will the devotees who are residents of Madhya-dvipa be merciful and show me - "Oh look! Here is our Lord, Gauranga-Sri Hari! On the bank of Brahma Kunda within the town of Brahma Nagar He is dancing and chanting with His associates in a grand kirtana."

60. When will I see that astounding form of Gora with beautiful complexion like pure gold, wearing a garland of forest flowers, with two long arms, and booming in a loud voice, "O brothers! All of you please chant the holy name in unison!"

61. At that moment, all the devotees headed by Srivasa will shout "Hari! Hari!" and begin performing sankirtan. Someone will exclaim, "Chant the name of Gaurahari, dear brother! Without Gaura we cannot attain the service of Radha and Krsna!"

62. Near Uccha Hatta is the place known as Pancha Veni ("five streams"). It is considered a holy pilgrimage spot by the demigods, who come here on vacation. At this place the three streams of the river Ganga (Bhagarathi, Bhogavati and Alakananda) plus the Jamuna and Sarasvati rivers all join together, desiring to perform service to Lord Gaura.

63. Here Gaurahari and His associates take bath, thereby purifying the tirtha from all the sins left by the people of Kali-yuga. Vedavyasa and the assembly of rishis recognise that in all these fourteen worlds there is no other place that can compare with Pancha Veni.

64. When will I bathe in the waters of the Pancha Veni and thereby remember the lotus feet of Sri Gauranga? Filling the palms of my hands with the very water that has washed the feet of Gaura and drinking my fill, becoming madly intoxicated by topics about Lord Gaura - when will I be so blessed?

65. Across the Ganga River from Pancha Veni is the enchanting island called Kola-dvipa, where the Lord appeared to His devotee Murari Gupta in the forms of a boar. All the scriptures call this place Varaha Ksetra. Rarely attained even by the demigods, this is a purely spiritual realm pervaded with transcendental bliss.

66. Famous throughout the entire universe is the town of Kuliya Pahar, by all means the topmost place of Sri Gauranga's pastimes. When Sri Krsna Caitanya attempted a journey to Vrindavan immediately after taking sannyasa, He was tricked (by Nityananda Prabhu) and instead came to this town in the district of Nadiya.

67. At this place is the school of Vidya Vacaspati, the popular son of Visrada. Who did not know him? Being the unalloyed servant of the Lord by the power of his pure devotion he attracted his own Prabhu once while taking bath in the Ganga.

68. When will I stand still on this bank of the Ganga by the door of Vidya Vacaspati's school and view the opulence of the spiritual kingdom? After a few moments will the Lord, who is king among sannyasis, suddenly appear up in the palace before me very eyes?

69. Seeing the golden effulgence of the Lord in the form of a sannyasi, I will fall to the earth in great anxiety. I will feel just as the gopis did upon seeing Krsna in Dvaraka dressed like a royal prince; thus they cried while remembering His sweet and simple cowherd pastimes on the bank of the Jamuna.

70. I long to take the moonlike Gaura-chandra back to Mayapur where He is dressed like a young boy and His divine limbs are radiant wit ornaments, where His hair is long and curly and Hid dhoti folded thrice, where He performs pastimes with His devotees in His own Garden named Isodyana.

71. Of course, this sannyasi is my Lord and I am just His servant. These different appearances that the Lord assumes are but some of His unlimited pastimes. Still, my heart longs to take the Lord back to the temple of Srivasa Pandita on the bank of Prithu Kunda!

72. A little further on from here I see the holy place called Sri Samudragar, the purifier of the whole universe. This is where Bhima had fought with King Samudra Sena and received a personal audience with the Lord, Who is the friend of the fallen and Who acknowledges His pure devotees.

73. Also, the ocean personally comes upstream to this spot by taking shelter of the river Ganga. Seeing the pastimes of Navadvipa Dhama, the ocean is astounded with divine ecstatic love. In this way, the splendorous holy place known as Sri Ganga Sigara eternally shines near the town of Navadvipa. This tirtha is seen both by the demigods and the demons alike.

74. Only the most fortunate souls can see this island of Kola-dvipa, the abode of supreme bliss, which is non different from the forest of Sri Bahulavan in Braja. Sri Sachi-kumara regularly brings His associates here, and deeply absorbed in the ecstasy of kirtan He dances again and again.

75. O Kola-dvipa! Please be merciful to this worthless person and give me the benediction of living in Navadvipa among the devotees! Kindly grant me the right to the treasure of the pastimes of Sri Gauranga! In life or in death, Prabhu Gauranga is my Lord!

76. In the northern part of Kola-dvipa is the village called Champa Hatta, which perpetually shines beautifully within Navadvipa Dhama. This Champa Hatta is a great holy place and is quite an enchanting village. It is where the poet Jayadeva worships the moonlike Gaura.

77. Here, in the home of Vani-natha, the Son of Sachi performed the congregational chanting of the holy names in the company of His associates. Thus there was a great, great festival in which Lord Gauranga displayed the spiritual opulence of His own ecstatic love.

78. In this village of Champa Hatta is also a forest of champaka trees, from which the gopi names Champaka-lata regularly gathers flowers (for making Radha and Krsna's garlands). This village in Navadvipa is non-different from the forest of Khadiravan in Braja, where Krsna and Balarama like to take rest.

79. The island called Ritu-dvipa is very enchanting, being covered with numerous kinds of forests.

It is where all the seasons headed by Spring are eternally engaged in service to Lord Gaura. The very land relieves all troubles, for it is the abode of transcendental bliss. This area is the same as Radha Kunda in Braja.

80. Sometimes during the wild sporting of sankirtan at this place and singing the glories of Lord Krsna, Sri Gauranga remembers Krsna's pastimes of tending the cows. Thus he loudly and repeatedly calls out the names of the cows: "O Syamali! O Dhavali! Then calling for His cowherd boyfriends Sridama and Subala, He breaks down and cries in great sorrow.

81. When will I wander about the island of Ritu-dvipa, seeing the beauty of the forest and remembering these pastimes of the Lord? Suddenly I will catch a glimpse of the pastimes being performed at Radha Kunda and become completely stunned by such a wonderful vision.

82. Here on the bank of the Manasa Ganga river, Balarama and Krsna along with Their cowherd boyfriends named Dama, Bala, and Mahabala head countless calves to secluded forests. While sporting numerous pastimes and playing tricks, all the boys sing the glories of Krsna.

83. The cowherd boys then sit down and engage in various types of funny conversations. Meanwhile, the calves keep grazing and grazing until they

wander off to distant woods. Losing sight of them, all the boys become alarmed, but at the sound of Krsna's flute the calves immediately come running back.

84. While I am watching and watching this pastime with full attention, suddenly the scene vanishes and I will fall to the ground unconscious...

...Regaining my awareness after some time, I shall rise up and then continue wandering slowly and sadly throughout the forest.

85. "O Gauranga, O Krsna-chandra, O Oceans of mercy! You are the wealth for the wretched and poor, and I am the lowest rascal!" Saying this while weeping and sobbing continuously, I will move onwards. Then suddenly I will behold the town of Vidya Nagar.

86. This place is the abode of the four Vedas and the sixty-four branches of knowledge. Vidya Nagar is without a doubt the central seat of Sarasvati, the goddess of learning. Taking shelter of this putha, Lord Brahma, Shiva and the rishis have revealed all types of knowledge to the material world.

87. Knowing that the Lord would sport His education pastimes here, the teacher of the demigods named Brihaspati gave up his abode in the heavenly planets and took the form of Vasudeva Sarvabhauma. Here at Vidya Nagar he taught all types of knowledge according to various processes.

88. Whoever lives at Vidya Nagar ("the town of knowledge") and sings the glories of Gaura becomes a fortunate teacher and will never know grief. Whoever takes darshan of the area of Vidya Nagar and worships Lord Gaura (The nectar-producing Moon) will be freed from all ignorance.

89. Will I ever see that beautiful Sri Gaura-sundara as He goes to Vidya Nagar out of His affinity for gaining knowledge? I will see Him chastising Devananda Mahasaya with strong words for committing an offense into Srivasa Pandita. Thus the merciful Lord always takes the side of His devotee and defends him.

90. Even Ananta Shesha cannot understand anything about the pastimes of my Lord — when He will become excited by a particular action, what He meditates on while sitting still, why He gives up His kirtan to chastise the students (who criticised him for chanting "gopi, gopi") nor how much happiness He feels by defeating His teachers.

91. Whatever the Lord does is a cause of bliss. The Lord is completely

independent and I am simply His humble servant. My tiny intelligence is naturally limited, and so I have no power whatsoever to judge His actions.

92. All the inhabitants of Navadvipa who act as the Lord's teachers are nourishes of His eternal pastimes; therefore they are worthy of my respects. All of you - please show your compassion to me, a fallen and destitute person! Kindly bestow upon me the qualification for chanting nama- sankirtana.

93. To the tirtha of Vidya Nagar I make this request - I pray that the ignorance which hides the truth of Lord Gaura's pastimes may never cover my mind. With that veil lifted, may I always transcend and live far beyond the realm of maya's illusion.

94. North of Vidya Nagar shines the island of Jahnu-dvipa, where the forest hermitage of the ascetic Janu Muni is visible to all moving and non-moving beings. Here the best of munis drink some water from the river Ganga and the river then appeared as his daughter named Jahnavi.

95. Here are Jahnu Muni's hermitage, Krsna's devotee named Bhisma learned Bhagavata Dharma relating to Lord Trivikrama. Jahnu Himself took to worshipping the Lord in a manner free from duplicity and easily attained the lotus feet of Sri Krsna Caitanya.

96. This island of Jahnu-dvipa is non different from the forest of Bhadravan in Braja. When will that spotless divine forest be visible to my eyes? Within that forest is the hill known as Bhisma Tila. On top of that hill I shall stay and perform my worship of the Lord.

97. In the evening Bhisma-deva with a pleased mind will appear before me in his pure spiritual body - his complexion blackish like Krsna's holding Tulasi beads in his hand and marked with twelve tilaka marks on his body, he is overflowing with the bliss of constantly chanting the Lord's holy names.

98. He will say to me, "Listen, O newcomer to Navadvipa! Today my words are praising the glories of Lord Gauranga. Long ago, during the battle of Kuru-ksetra, I was struck down and fatally wounded. While dying I was able to behold the form of the moonlike Sri Krsna-chandra with fixed attention."

99. "At the time of my death, Lord Krsna told me, 'Formerly you had darshan of Navadvipa, and by that pious activity you have gained Gauranga's mercy. Thus

you have now become the eternal resident of Navadvipa.

100. (Bhisma continues) "therefore, I also ask you to please give up all other desires, live in Navadvipa and worship Gaurahari. You need no longer fear the bondage of material sense objects, for you will definitely attain the service of Gauranga's lotus feet."

101. "By the desire of the Lord, the liberated souls can see at all times the pastimes of Krsna and the pastimes of Gaura in this Dhama. Here is the complete absence of the conditioned soul's afflictions such as lamentation, fear, death, all causes of disturbance, as well as desires to be inimical to the Lord."

102. "The pure devotees are intoxicated by drinking the wine of servitude to Lord Krsna, and they are all immersed in the ocean of happiness while performing their respective forms of worship.

They do not know the pains of the material world, nor do they experience the difficulty of any wants because everyone is situated in their pure spiritual bodies and possess only perfect desires."

103. "The Supreme Lord has multitudes of servants who are limitless in number. His devoted associates come from two main categories - the nitya mukta or eternally liberated souls, and the baddha-mukta or liberated souls coming from the material world as former conditioned souls. In these very forests of Navadvipa Dhama, the Lord performs His eternal pastimes along with each of these devotees according to their own respective emotional mood."

104. "This transcendental abode is unlimited, with no presence of dull matter whatsoever. Here, only the spiritually conscious energy is in control as the predominating goddess. Everything and everyone here is in perfect accord as followers of the Lord, including place, time, actions, and the bodies of the living entities. all these things are harmoniously situated far beyond the illusory energy - this truth is definitely absolute."

105. "According to the Lord's desire, as long as we do not give up the material body, then for that long we will not perceive the actual ecstatic mood of this Dhama in its complete form. That is because your intelligence refuses to give up its habitual attachment to material designations."

106. "According to the Lord's desire, when you receive a spiritual body then

your progressive advancement here is unobstructed. The veil of illusion generated by the material energy will retreat far away, and you will obtain unlimited bliss in this eternal spiritual realm."

107. "O brother! As long as you have this material body, then very carefully remain always fixed in the principles of devotion. Service to the devotees, chanting the holy name of Krsna and worship of the Divine Couple Sri Sri Radha and Krsna should be performed diligently at all times while remaining aloof from temptations of sense gratification.

108. "By the power of the mercy of the Dhama, the mercy of the holy name and the mercy of the devotees, expertly keep undesirable association far away. Very soon you will attain residence in the eternal abode, where pure devotional service to the Divine Couple will become manifest by direct revelation.

109. Hearing these instructions of Bhisma-deva, I will fall down at his feet like a rod and offer obeisances with all my limbs. Giving me his blessings, he will then disappear. Weeping and weeping, I will proceed to the forest on the island of Modadruma-dvipa.

110. This island of Modadruma is non different from the forest of Sri Bhandiravan in Braja. All the animals and birds are fully spiritual entities having the nature of pure goodness. In the branches of the trees sit cuckoos who incessantly sing the glories of Lord Gauranga, Sita and Rama.

111. Countless banyan trees spread out their shade-giving branches splendrously here in Bhandiravan and block out the rays of the sun. When will this wonderfully shady place, where Balarama and Krsna displayed their pastimes to the world, ever be visible to my eyes?

112. Wandering and wandering about, observing the glory of the forest, I will suddenly behold the cottage of Lord Sri Rama. Then will I see Rama Himself, the colour of fresh durva grass, dressed like a brahmacari and sitting in one place along with Laksmana and Sita.

113. Seeing Lord Ramachandra's beautiful form within that forest, I will swoon on the spot. My entire body overwhelmed with ecstatic love, I will remain stunned and speechless as I fill both my eyes that are heartily drinking the beauty of His form.

114. Being merciful, Laksmana will come forward slowly, set down some fruit and place his feet upon my hear. He will say, "My dear child, please eat this fruit. Since we are living here in the forest, this is all we have to offer our guests.

115. Just as he says this, the vision of this pastime will dissolve. Weeping and weeping, I will eat at the fruit. Oh, will I ever again see the figure of Rama, green as fresh durva grass? In my heart, I will meditate on that inconceivably beautiful form.

116. Aha! Oh, my heart weeps without end to leave this forest of Bhandiravan, the abode of transcendental desire-fulfilling gems! In this place Balarama and Krsna, on the pretext of herding cows, perform so many wonderful pastimes. In this same place, Lord Gora performs manifold pastimes, becoming madly intoxicated with the sound of kirtan in the company of His friends.

117. Then slowly I shall proceed to the town of Vaikunthapur, within the forest called Nihsreyasa. This place is resplendent with profuse spiritual grandeur. Here I will see Paravyoma-natha, the Lord of the spiritual sky, being worshipped by all the demigods. He eternally resides in this realm along with His three energies (Lila, Bhu and Sri).

118. As much as my Sri Krsna is endowed with utmost sweetness (madhurya), similarly the Lord of Vaikuntha is endowed with absolute opulence and grandeur (aisvarya). Lord Krsna as Vrajendra- nandana never gives up this same opulence, however, but such aspects of His spiritual grandeur are not noticed by His pure devotees.

119. The Lord of all creation was very merciful to Narada Muni and satisfied Narada by hiding His divine opulence and transforming Himself into the form of Gauranga. Seeing that very figure of Lord Gauranga, I will be plunged into the ocean of bliss while dancing wildly and crying in a loud voice.

120. Crossing over the river Viraja and bypassing the town of Brahmani Nagar, I will climb on top of the hill called Arka Tila(The hill of the sun god). sitting there in solitude and worshipping Lord Gaurahari, I will become intoxicated with sweet nectar-mellow of the holy name by singing it with great relish.

121. Arka-deva, the sun god, will mercifully appear to me — with red-hued complexion, long arms, wearing pinkish cloth and Tulasi beads, with sandalwood paste spread over all his limbs, the name of Gaurahari constantly on

his tongue, and tears flowing from his eyes.

122. He will speak to me, "Dear child, I have appeared before you because you are the devotee of Gauranga. We demigods, although powerful directors of material affairs, are also servants of Gauranga's lotus feet. In my mind, I simply aspire to be the servant of the servant of Gaura."

123. "By my blessings, you will get Krsna-bhakti, and you will have the spiritual strength to live in the Dhama and sing the Lord's pure holy name. But please come here from time to time, singing the nectar-smeared name of Krsna for my satisfaction."

124. Falling down like a rod to offer obeisances at Surya-deva's feet, I will then proceed onward to the town of Mahatpur. This Mahatpur is non different from the forest of Kamyavan, a place of Krsna's pastimes in Braja. Here the devotees of Lord Gaura raise a tumultuous sound in chanting the name and glories of Sri Krsna.

125. In this forest, the five brothers headed by Yudhisthira (the Pandavas) lived in exile for some time with their wife Draupadi. They invited Srila Vyasadeva here and listened to him recite the Gaura Purana. Remaining in seclusion, they performed intensive worship of Sri Gaurahari.

126. Even now in this forest of Kamyavan, devotees can see the assembly of Yudhisthira and the same named Bhauma, Shuka, Devala, Chavan and Garga Muni. Sitting at the base of a tree, they are all weeping as they hear the stories of Lord Gaura.

127. When will I go to that learned assembly? Bowing down to the sages from afar, I will then come closer and join them. Hearing from the very mouth of Vyasadeva the amazing stories of Gaura delivering the atheists, I will breathe a heavy sigh in ecstatic love.

128. After some time, seeing the assembly vanish, I will shout the name of Gauranga, cry bitterly and roll about on the earth. Feeling hunger during the second quarter of the day, I shall go and pick forest-fruits to eat.

129. Just then Draupadi, the wife of the Pandavas, will suddenly appear and approach me carrying cooked greens and rice. She will address me, "Dear child, please take this offering of mine. It is two or four handfuls of rice prasad that

have been offered to Gauranga."

130. Offering Draupadi my full obeisance's, I will feel most worthless as I extend my hand and accept the greens and rice. The prasad remnants of Lord Gauranga are most astonishing and by honouring them my tongue will become fortunate.

131. Whoever gets the mercy of such maha-prasad certainly obtains pure devotional service to Lord Krsna. May that mercy eternally be mine, which will enable me to easily give up this world of limitless material illusion.

132. After having taken the maha-prasad given me by Draupadi, when will I arrive on the island of Rudra-dvipa? Splendrously present within the forest of Navadvipa, this place is the same as Mount Kailasa, the abode of Lord Shiva. The smallest fraction of this mountain's effulgence shines brightly throughout the entire three worlds.

133. This place is where the eleven Rudras of mixed blue and red complexion dance wildly and become stunned with love of Gaura. Here the sage Durvasa Muni made his hermitage, gave up his mistaken practice of impersonal yoga and began worshipping Lord Gauranga's lotus feet.

134. The great sages named Astavakra, Dattatreya and many other yogis along with the five-faced Shiva, all gave up the philosophy of impersonalism and instead engaged themselves in meditation on the lotus feet of Sri Krsna Caitanya. Becoming detached from all forms of liberation, they especially rejected the desire to merge in the all-pervading light of the brahman effulgence.

135. Sometime I will wander and wander throughout the forest of Rudravan and come to the place called Medra-sthala. Sitting there, I will meditate on the lotus feet of Lord Gaura. Then I will behold a supreme beautiful goddess appearing nearby.

136. Acknowledging the presence of this forest-goddess, I will respectfully bow down to her. Getting up, I will ask, "Please tell me, mother — what is your name?" With tears in her eyes, the goddess will sadly reply, "Listen, dear child, my sorrow is impossible to describe."

137. "There are five of us who are daughters of the five kinds of jnana (transcendental knowledge). We are the five types of liberation - please listen to our names: Salokya, Samipya, Sarsti, Sayuja and Nirvana. I have been given the

name Nirvana, for I am the form of liberation involving total annihilation of the soul.

138. "My four sisters have gone off to Vaikunthapur, leaving me behind. Thus left alone, I have become bewildered. By the mercy of Lord Shiva, Dattatreya and many other sages were endeavouring to attain me for some time.

139. "But now even those sages have rejected me and are living somewhere in Rudra-dvipa. All the people are singing of this incident. Uselessly I have been searching for the rishis and still cannot locate them anywhere! Oh when will I find them again?"

140. "Sri Gauranga Prabhu has delivered everyone, yet still He remains merciless only to me. Therefore I will find a place right now in which to give up my life and all people shall know that place to be called Nidaya (merciless).

141. Just by hearing the very name of Sayujya, the liberation of merging impersonally with the Lord, my heart will tremble as if I had heard the name of the witch Putana. Trembling in great fear I will cover my eyes and drop to the ground on the spot. Then upon feeling the touch of some great soul, I will look up.

142. I will rise and see before me the figure of Lord Shiva, dancing wildly while exclaiming "baum! baum!' He will sing, "O Sri Sachi-nandana! O most merciful one! Please give Your causeless mercy to all living entities and drive away their fears!"

143. I will fall at the feet of Maha-deva, the Lord of the demigods, and pray at his feet for my own purification. Being merciful, the Lord of the universe Visvesvara will place his feet upon my head and impart to me the essence of instruction.

144. He will say, "Oh, listen! Devotional service to Lord Krsna is the essence of life, whereas all endeavours for jnana, karma, mukti, and yoga are totally useless. By my mercy you will conquer maya and very quickly attain the shade of the lotus feet of Lord Gaura."

145. "To the south, just see the place called Sri Pulina, which is so enchanting. That is the abode of Vrindavan Dhama within Navadvipa. Go there and personally witness Krsna's pastimes. Very soon you will attain the divine lotus

feet of Sri Radhika."

146. After giving me these instructions, Lord Shambhu will disappear. Bowing down, I will then move on, crying and crying all the while. After arriving and viewing the divine realm of Sri Pulina for some time, I will fall to the earth and roll about, losing consciousness...

147. ...During that unconscious state of samadhi, in a divine vision of my own personal revelation, a wondrous figure will appear performing her constitutional service. Then I will recognise that it is I, the maidservant named Kamala Manjari, an eternal assistant of Ananga Manjari

148. Sri Ananga Manjari is the goddess of my heart. Hopefully, she will show great mercy and introduce me to our own group-leader (Sri Lalita Sakhi). Then she will give me the service of preparing celestial camphor and reveal to me the confidential pastimes of the Divine Pair.

149. We will go near Sri Pulina and see the Rasa Mandala, the spotlessly pure circular arena where Gopendra-nandana Sri Krsna, surrounded by a hundred million gopis, enjoys the pastime of dancing with Sri Radhika, the predominating Goddess of the great dance. Thus He is stealing the hearts of all created beings.

150. The sheer splendour of such artistically amorous dancing does not exist anywhere within the three worlds! By great fortune, whoever is able to see it becomes deeply plunged into it that very moment. By the power of such fortune, if someone actually attains the trance of viewing this divine dance in their own samadhi, they will never be able to give up the pure joy of that astounding sight!

151. I will not be able to describe the magnificence of that sight to behold! I will lock it in my heart and perpetually gaze upon it. Living in my own grove, while cultivating that vision within my heart, I will constantly render devotional service under the direction of the sakhis.

152. Ananga Manjari Sakhi, the younger sister of Sri Radhika, will show great mercy and personally escort me around the Dhama. To the west of the Rasa Mandala we shall visit Sri Dhira Samira (where the gentle breeze blows), and a little further off see the huge banyan tree called Vamsi Vata and the wide bank of the divine river Jamuna.

153. Being questioned by Sri Rupa Manjari, my mistress Ananga Manjari will reply, "This new dasi will be engaged in Lalita Sakhi's service. Her name is Kamala Manjari, and she is very devoted to Sri Gauranga. Please be merciful now and give her entrance into the flow of spontaneous devotional service to our Lordships.

154. Hearing this statement of my mistress, Sri Rupa Manjari will lightly touch my body with her hand of mercy. Her touch will suddenly and deeply impart to me the sublime spiritual emotion of spontaneous loving devotion and the intense desire to perform rupanuga bhajan, worship that follows in her own footsteps.

155. My complexion is like lightning, my dress sparkles with patterns like the midnight stars, I am adorned with various ornaments, and with a camphor tray in my hand I shall fall flat at Sri Rupa Manjari's feet and beg her for the exclusive shelter of Sri Radha's lotus feet.

156. Sri Rupa Manjari and Sri Ananga Manjari will then take me to the private grove of the most charming Lalita Sakhi, the mistress of Svananda-sukhada-kunja, who is sitting inside perpetually thinking about her service rendered to the divine lotus feet of Radha.

157. I shall fall flat and offer obeisances at Lalita's feet and she will ask Ananga Manjari to explain my identity. Ananga Manjari will reply, "This person is an inhabitant of Navadvipa who begs to become your maidservant and thereby serve the Divine Couple."

158. At this, Lalita will become very pleased and say to Ananga Manjari (the personified potency of fresh feminine youth), "Listen, beloved sprout! Give her a dwelling beside your own grove. Keep her there and attentively arrange her desired service."

159. "At the time of performing your own service take her along and gradually she will receive the mercy of Sri Radha. Without the mercy of Radha, have we ever seen anyone attain the service of the Divine Couple?"

160. Hearing Lalita's words, Ananga Manjari will give me a residence next to her own grove, making me her own maidservant. At the time of going to serve the Divine Couple, she will be very affectionate and graciously allow me to accompany her as a friend.

161. Performing my own duties, I shall catch a glimpse of the beautiful Divine Couple in the distance. And then, perhaps Srimati Radharani Herself will give me a direct order, show me Her personal mercy, and give me the shade of Her own lotus feet.

162. I will perpetually remain absorbed in performing that service, and gradually I will become skilful in its execution. By my expertise, I shall please Radha and Govinda. As a reward for my services, I will from times to time receive prasad ornaments that They had previously worn...

163. ...My dream suddenly breaks and I shall softly weep and weep. Gazing back at Sri Pulina, I will cross the river Bhagirathi. Living in my private grove next to Isodyana (The Lord's Garden) I will worship the greatest treasure - the Divine Couple Sri Sri Radha and Krsna, Who are non different from the moonlike Sri Gauranga.

164. I will worship Radha and Govinda while staying fixed in my own vows, and shall perpetually gaze upon Radha Kunda and Vrindavan. Remembering the feet of Ananga Manjari Sakhi, and remaining immersed in the bliss attained by my particular services performed for Their Lordships, I will thereby drown in pure ecstatic prema.

165. This Bhaktivinoda, the servant of the servants of Lord Sri Krsna Caitanya, is begging for residence in Navadvipa Dhama. I am eager for the feet of Rupa Gosvami and Raghunatha Gosvami (Rupa Manjari and Rati Manjari), and from them I anxiously beg to achieve my own desired perfect spiritual body and service.

166. O residents of Navadvipa, Vrindavan and Jagannatha Puri! Please establish me eternally in Isodyana, the abode of the Lord! That is certainly within my power, for this is also your abode. As my position is simply as a servant, only on the pretext of somehow assisting you in your service to Their Lordships will I be able to obtain residence in the Dhama.

167. O Navadvipa Dhama, please shower me with your mercy! Without your favour, how can anyone attain residence in the Lord's holy abode? Please do not consider whether I am qualified or not. I am simply clinging to the instructions of Jahnava Ma and Nityananda Prabhu as the essence of my life.

168. Whoever reads this Bhava Taranga with devotional faith will experience the

nectar of the sportive pastimes of Gauranga arising in their minds. Sri Svarupa Damodara will certainly show them mercy, accepting them as personal associates in the spiritual Dhama while giving the shade of his own feet.

Thus ends Navadvipa Bhava Taranga by Thakura Bhaktivinoda

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